

Progress on Statewide Immunization Registry

Charlene Graves, M.D.
Medical Director
ISDH Immunization Program

Since January 2002, when the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) began the development of a statewide, Internet-based immunization registry, great progress has occurred in registry development. As of August 6, 2003, the Children and Hoosiers Immunization Registry Program (CHIRP) has immunization data on 1.8 million patients maintained in a secure database. This includes 13.5 million vaccinations received by both children and adults.

Through the work of a large number of ISDH Immunization Program staff and personnel from Scientific Technologies Corporation (STC), the vendor involved in this three-year project, CHIRP contains immunization data from all 94 local health departments in the state. There are now 1,476 registered users, including local health departments, other public facilities, and 38 private physicians. In addition, 123 school corporations have "View-Only" access to assist school nursing staff when performing the annual school audit that assesses immunization coverage of school-age children.

With the major goal accomplished of involving all local health departments in 2002, the focus for 2003 is targeted to outreach and enrollment of other public facilities (for example, community health centers) and physicians in private practice. Enrollment packets have been prepared, and outreach to these health care providers is planned to take place on a regional basis. Physicians who are already enrolled as Vaccines for Children (VFC) providers will initially be contacted, particularly those who are "high-volume" providers, based on the annual volume of immunizations administered. A recent change in state law allows for inclusion of patient immunization data in CHIRP without specific patient consent. Patients who choose not to participate can still "opt-out" by signing a form designed for that purpose. However, the advantages of CHIRP as a database to provide easy access to immunization records for actively enrolled health professionals is readily apparent to both providers and patients.

Medical and professional organizations, the state Medicaid program, WIC, and managed care organizations are all considered as community partners in this outreach effort to familiarize health care providers with the efficiency and ease of accessing immunization information through CHIRP. The Indiana Immunization Coalition has played an important role in supporting immunization registry development and will continue to be an advocate for CHIRP. Continued involvement with school systems will be enhanced and day care centers will become involved with CHIRP.

As noted in the article on Indiana's current immunization coverage levels in this issue, one goal of the ISDH Immunization Program is to assure that at least 90% of two-year-old children are age-appropriately immunized. Continued development and implementation of CHIRP will ensure that a sustainable system has been established to monitor the percentage of children who are adequately immunized and assist in the attainment of this goal. More information about CHIRP can be obtained from the CHIRP website at <http://www.chirp.isdh.state.in.us> or by calling ISDH at (888) 227-4439.
